

Her own appearance, while it fully justified the intervention of the philanthropist, only deepened the mystery which surrounded the case. If she were an enchanted princess given over for a time into the hands of wicked fairies, she could not have been subjected to more singular and capricious cruelties. She was thin and pinched with hunger and cold—not the momentary deprivation of food and warmth which is all that most of us know of those words—but the long-continued habitual want of sufficient food and clothing which ends in a dull unconsciousness of the lack, and a gradual wasting of the powers of body and mind. She was too small for her age—stunted by her wretched life—and her poor little wits had had so scanty cherishing that she possessed hardly more than speech and fear. Yet to prove that she was not naturally depraved, she had a quick sense of kindness and a ready and timely gratitude. The most pathetic thing about her little story was its matter-of-fact statements of sufferings which evidently seemed to her nothing remarkable. There was no resentment against those who had used her so ill. She knew nothing of the world outside the lodgings of the Connollys; she was never allowed to see other children, much less to visit or play with them. She was never out of the house except at night, and finally, she had no recollection of ever having been in the street! If there is any record of so dismal a childhood in the world, we have never heard of it. The first joy of children is in each other's company. They will run away from the tenderest parental efforts to play with those of their own age. This little waif, eight years old, never had known a child. Kisses and soft words are as necessary to children as air and bread, but this little woman never knew what they were. Young savages have at least the free air and the soft grass in their favor. Even the dirty little Arabs of New-York take a certain pleasure in the gutters of the busy and lively streets where they live. This Mary Ellen, aged eight years, had never, to her recollection, been in the street.